

NHSC SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I apply to the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program?

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Scholarship Program accepts applications once a year. The scholarship pays tuition, fees, other reasonable costs, and provides a living stipend in exchange for at least 2 years of service at an NHSC-approved site in a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) of greatest need.

2. How many scholarships does the National Health Service Corps award each year?

The NHSC Scholarship Program for the 2011–2012 school year is expected to be very competitive. The program anticipates more applicants for scholarship awards than there are funds available. Prospective scholarship recipients are encouraged to apply early.

3. When can I expect to hear from the NHSC as to whether or not I have received a scholarship?

NHSC Scholarship Program applicants selected for awards will be notified via email by September 30, 2011. Eligible individuals who do not receive a scholarship award will be notified via email by October 31, 2011.

4. When do NHSC scholarship tuition and stipend payments start?

The NHSC Scholarship Program notifies schools when their students are selected to receive an NHSC Scholarship. The school is required to submit an invoice to the NHSC for payment of tuition and fees each term. Scholarship recipients receive stipend payments directly, beginning in October. The first stipend payment should be received no later than November 7, 2011.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Tuition, Required Fees, Other Reasonable Costs, and Stipend.

5. If my school has not sent an invoice for my tuition and fees to the NHSC before the start of school, how do I handle my tuition?

If your school requires payment of tuition and fees prior to receipt of your National Health Service Corps Scholarship, you will need to obtain funding from another source. You will be reimbursed by the school, after payment has been received from the NHSC.

6. If I do not receive payment from the NHSC Scholarship Program before the start of the school year and have to borrow money to pay tuition and fees, will the money I receive from the scholarship be enough to pay the interest on my loan?

If you have to borrow to pay tuition and fees prior to receipt of your NHSC Scholarship, you will be responsible for any interest charges.

7. How does the National Health Service Corps know how much my tuition and fees are?

The NHSC Scholarship Program requests information regarding in-state and out-of-state tuition and required fees from each school annually. The tuition and fees portion of each award is based on the cost information obtained from each school.

8. Is health insurance included in the fees paid by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship?

Yes, if the school requires health insurance for all students, the NHSC will cover the cost of insurance, which qualifies under Other Reasonable Costs.

9. Are the stipend and other reasonable costs payments provided by the National Health Service Corps Scholarship considered taxable income? If so, how much tax is withheld?

Only the monthly stipend payments made to National Health Service Corps Scholars are considered taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service (effective January 1, 2002). The tax withheld is determined by the W-4 tax withholdings form participants submit to the NHSC with their scholarship applications.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Tuition, Fees, Other Reasonable Costs, and Stipend.

10. Can I continue receiving National Health Service Corps Scholarship financial assistance while I am serving residency?

The NHSC does not provide financial assistance to scholarship recipients during residency and postgraduate training.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Deferments and Post-Degree Training.

11. Can I work part time to fulfill my National Health Service Corps Scholarship service obligation?

Yes, NHSC Scholarship recipients can fulfill their service obligation by practicing part time, provided required service hours are completed.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Service Requirements.

12. Can I go from a National Health Service Corps Scholarship-supported PA/NP training program to medical school before serving my NHSC obligation?

Your NHSC Scholarship contract requires you to fulfill your service commitment upon completion of the health professions degree and/or training for which you received the scholarship.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Service Requirements.

13. Can National Health Service Corps Scholarship recipients who have completed their first residencies serve a second primary care residency before beginning to fulfill their service commitments?

NHSC Scholarship recipients must fulfill their service commitments after completing their required residency. Scholarship recipients may be approved for a second primary care residency on a case-by-case basis consistent with the needs of the NHSC. Requests must be submitted by scholarship recipients in their last year of residency training.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Deferments and Post-Degree Training.

14. I want to specialize in internal medicine, but would also like to subspecialize. If I am selected to receive the National Health Service Corps Scholarship, will I be able to do this before serving my NHSC service commitment?

NHSC Scholars must complete their service commitment as soon as they have completed their required education and training.

15. What if the Government changes the rules after I have accepted the National Health Service Corps Scholarship?

The scholarship agreement between you and the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services remains binding, regardless of any changes in NHSC program requirements.

16. What if I change my mind about going into primary care after I have accepted the scholarship or while in residency?

Accepting an NHSC Scholarship is a serious commitment. If, after graduation, you enter training that is not approved by the NHSC Scholarship Program, or you otherwise fail to comply with your contract, you will be liable for financial damages equal to three times the amount of your scholarship plus interest.

More information can be found in the Application and Program Guidance under Service Requirements.

17. How do I find job opportunities that are approved for the National Health Service Corps Scholarship and Loan Repayment programs?

The National Health Service Corps Recruitment Site (http://nhscjobs.hrsa.gov/Search_HPOL.aspx) allows you to identify current job opportunities in NHSC-approved sites by location and health professions discipline.

The site is updated daily and lists thousands of vacancies for NHSC Scholars and members receiving loan repayment. More than half of the vacancies are at HRSA-supported community health centers. Search for vacancies, then contact sites directly to learn more or apply.

18. What makes a site eligible for fulfillment of the National Health Service Corps service commitment?

Sites must apply to and be approved by the National Health Service Corps to be considered an NHSC-approved site. To become an NHSC-approved site, community-based health care providers must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be located in a designated Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA)
- Provide a continuum of services, including comprehensive primary health care and appropriate referrals or arrangements for specialty and inpatient care
- Treat all patients regardless of the method or ability of the patient to pay for services (e.g., accept Medicare/Medicaid assignments and have provisions for a sliding-fee scale).

19. How can NHSC Scholars access the Customer Service Portal to review payment, W-4, and contact information, ask questions, or request to defer the service start date?

The National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program Customer Service Portal allows NHSC Scholars to:

- View payment information
- View W-4 information
- Update contact information
- Ask a question
- Request to defer service start date

NHSC Scholars can register and access the portal at <https://programportal.hrsa.gov/extranet/participant>.

